

How to Involve the Media

Gaining media attention is an effective way to raise awareness during Child Abuse Prevention Month and throughout the year. Use the following suggestions to increase media exposure and educate your community about child abuse and neglect.

Develop a Press Release

The primary tool for gaining publicity is the press release. Press releases tell the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of a news story. The sample press release provided in this packet (on page 27) was written to announce Child Abuse Prevention Month and educate the public about what everyone can do to help prevent child abuse in their own communities. Spaces in the press release are designated for you to insert information about your organization and community. (See “Where to Find Child Abuse Data for Your State or Local Community,” page 33.)

Write an OpEd Piece

The Opinion/Editorial (OpEd) pages of newspapers include articles written by experts in certain fields. These articles usually offer a viewpoint on current events and hot topics. An OpEd should be sent to the editor of your local newspapers. You can locate the editor’s name at the top of the OpEd page in each newspaper. Remember to ask for word count limitations.

Submit Prewritten Articles to Community Newspapers

Community papers often accept prewritten articles and photographs. Call the editors or reporters at community papers at least six weeks before you would like your article to appear.

Secure Television and Radio Coverage

Don’t forget local broadcast media. Approach radio and television programs in the same way as newspapers. Send your press release to the appropriate person at the station at least four weeks in advance. Prior to sending your materials, listen to the shows and familiarize yourself with their formats.

Develop Public Service Announcements

Public service announcements (PSAs) are essentially free advertisements, available only to nonprofit organizations. Local radio and television stations donate a percentage of their air time to worthwhile campaigns; however, PSA spots are limited and many nonprofit organizations vie for available spots. Many media outlets require that PSA requests be submitted a minimum of six weeks prior to the desired print or air date. Sample PSAs are provided in this packet. (See page 31.)

